DR. STRANGE
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
5
DEC
02914
DOCTOR
STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS
WHEN STRIKES THE
SILVER
DAGGER!
B. RUNNER

Once he was a man like most *others* — a *wordly* man, seduced and jaded by *material* things. But then he discovered the *separate* reality, where *sorcery* and *men's souls* shaped the forces that shape our *lives*. In that instant, he was *born again*, to become a man like *no* other—a man who left us *behind*, as he strove to stand against the unseen subtle perils hovering *thick* and *black* around our fragile existence...

Stan Lee presents: Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™

CLOAK and DAGGER

THE PURLOINED EYE OF AGAMOTTO SHOWS THE MYSTERIOUS ZEALOT NAMED SILVER DAGGER THE FACE OF A DEAD MAN! DR. STRANGE, IN ESCAPING THE REALM OF UNREALITY IN WHICH HE WAS IMPRISONED--
--ENTERED THE DEPTHS OF DEATH-- AND DIED!
SILVER DAGGER HAS MURDERED THE MAGICIAN--
--AND CLEA KNOWS FOR CERTAIN WHO HIS NEXT VICTIM WILL BE!

STEVE ENGLEHART · FRANK BRUNNER	DICK GIORDANO	ORZECHOWSKI	MANTLO	ROY THOMAS
Author Co-Plotters Artist	Inks	Lettering	Color	Editor

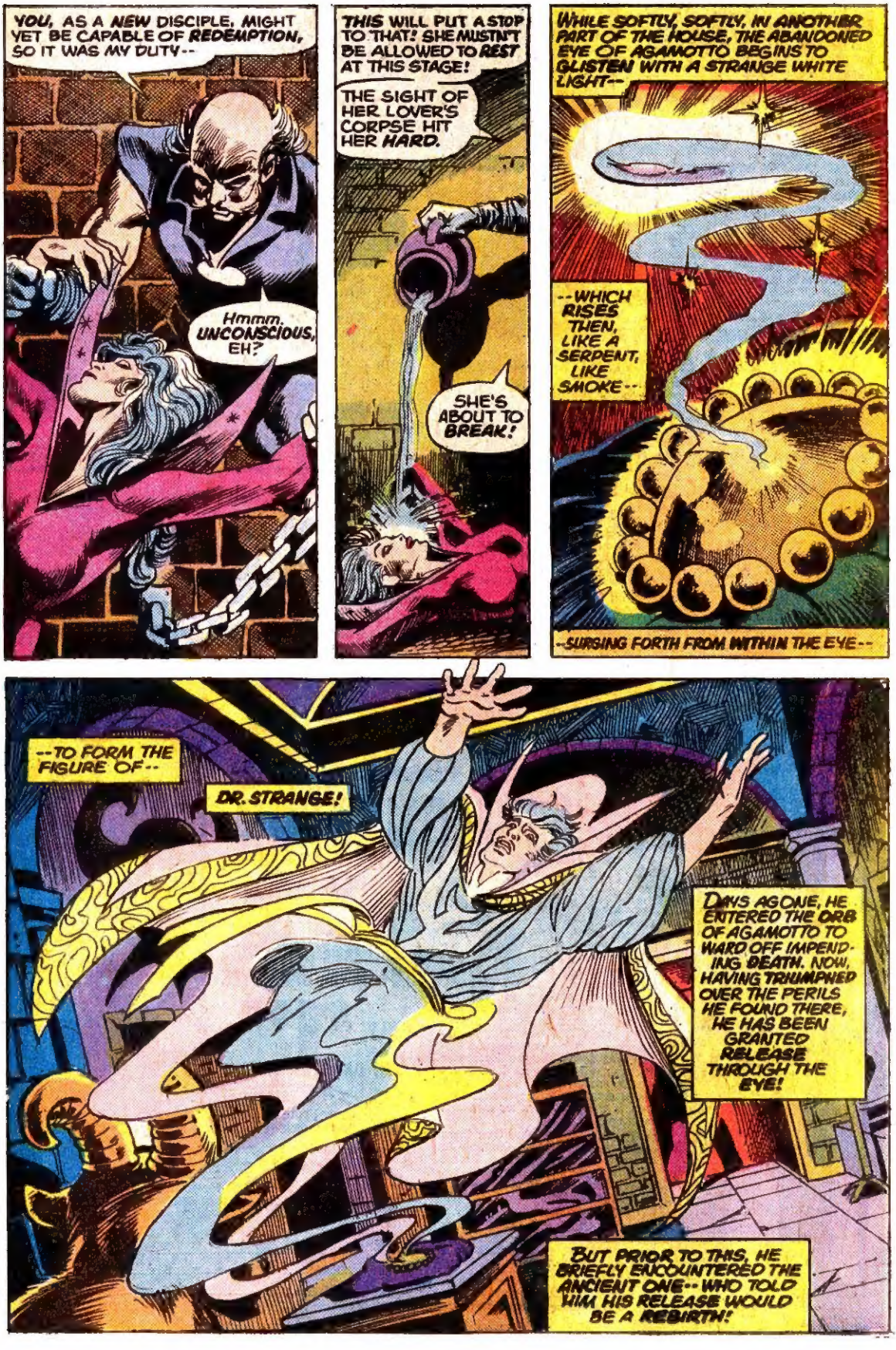
DOCTOR STRANGE is published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022. Published bi-monthly. Copyright ©1974 by Marvel Comics Group. A Division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved 575 Madison Avenue New York, N. Y. 10022. Vol. 1, No. 5, December, 1974 issue. Price 25¢ per copy in the U. S. and Canada. Subscription rate $3.50 for 12 issues. Canada $4.25. Foreign $5.50. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in the United States of America.

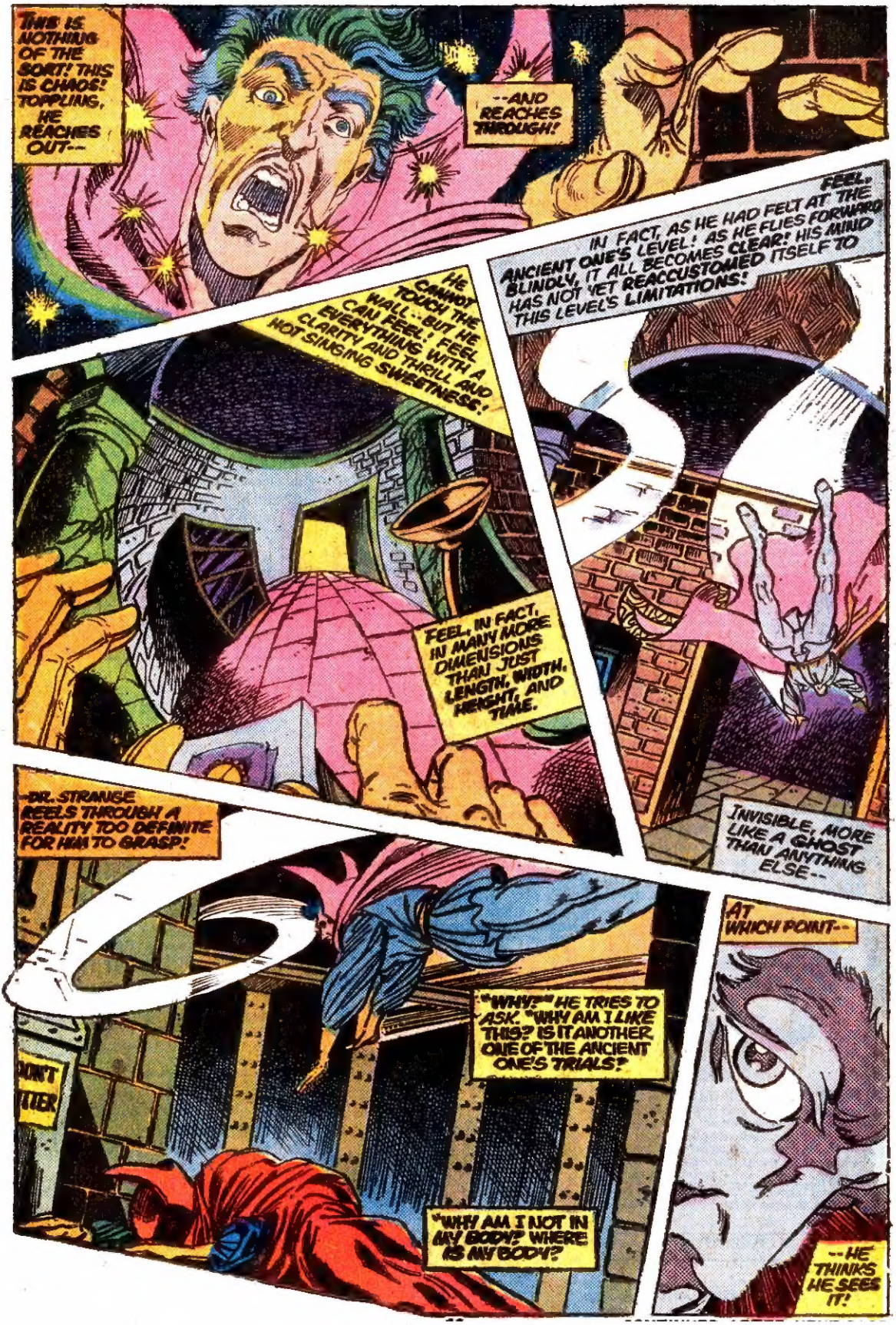
YOUR RESISTANCE TO MY FINE ARTS OF PERSUASION HAS GAINED YOU ONLY PAIN, LITTLE ONE--
--AND NOTHING MORE!
YOU HAVE PROLONGED A SUFFERING WHICH COULD SO EASILY HAVE TURNED TO JOY--
--LISTEN TO ME!
CURSE YOU!
NO, WITCH! I AM SAVED! IT'S YOU, WITH YOUR WALLOWING IN WITCHCRAFT AND BLASPHEMY, WHO'S CURSED HERSELF--
--UNLESS YOU PURGE YOURSELF OF YOUR SIN AND SURRENDER YOURSELF TO THE LORD!
I SLEW YOUR INSTRUCTOR, FOR HE WAS PAST REDEMPTION--
YOU'RE MAD! YOU'RE A SELF-RIGHTEOUS MADMAN!
RIGHTEOUS, YES-- BUT MAD-- NO!
I'M AS SANE AS ANYONE!
THEY CALLED CHRIST INSANE, TOO--AND COTTON MATHER-- AND THE MEMBERS OF THE INQUISITION!
LISTEN...

"... MY STORY BEGINS WITH THE VATICAN!
"MY LONG YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PRIESTHOOD HAD SEEN MY ASCENSION TO THE POSITION OF CARDINAL. AHEAD LAY BUT ONE LAST CHALLENGE...
"... THE PAPACY.
"I HAD BEEN AN EXCELLENT CLERIC, INSPIRING A HEALTHY RESPECT IN MY COLLEAGUES...
"... AND A DEEP REVERENCE IN THE LAITY.
"ACCORDINGLY, I WAS THE POPE'S CHOSEN ONE, AND AS OLD AGE CREPT UPON HIM, I DEVOTED ALL OF MY MEDITATION TO THE TASK GOD WOULD SOON DEMAND.
"BUT ONE MORNING, THE POPE CALLED ME TO HIS SIDE.
MY SON, THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS WILL PASS YOU BY, OVER MY PROTESTS.
PUBLICLY, THEY SPEAK OF YOUR YOUTH. PRIVATELY, THEY MURMER OF FANATICISM.
"HE WAS SORRY, BUT HE WAS HELPLESS--SO LATER I WATCHED AS ANOTHER RECEIVED MY PAPAL CROWN.
"IT WAS THEN I CAME TO COMPREHEND THE POWER OF THE DEVIL.

"I WANDERED THROUGH THE VATICAN, IMMERSED IN AMAZEMENT AT HOW OBVIOUS IT HAD ALL BECOME-- BUT GOD GUIDED MY FOOTSTEPS--
"--AND I FOUND MYSELF AT THE DOORS OF THE LIBRARY.
"THE VATICAN LIBRARY HAS THE MOST COMPLETE COMPILATION OF VOLUMES ON THE BLACK ARTS IN THE WORLD TODAY.
"I OPENED ONE, MORBIDLY CURIOUS--
"--AND I STAYED TO READ EVERY LINE OF THAT BOOK, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, AS I BEGAN TO REALIZE THE ANSWER!
"GOD HAD A MORE IMPORTANT TASK IN MIND FOR ME! I WAS TO BECOME HIS PERSONAL WEAPON IN HIS LONG-DORMANT WAR UPON SATAN!
"FOR SIX DAYS AND SIX NIGHTS, I STAYED IN THAT LIBRARY--
"--NEITHER SLEEPING NOR EATING AS I READ PAGE AFTER PAGE OF THAT FILTH!
NECRONOMICON
"MY GOAL WAS TO LEARN THE SECRETS INVOLVED IN THE WORKINGS OF MAGIC--
"--AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY--
"--I SUCCEEDED!

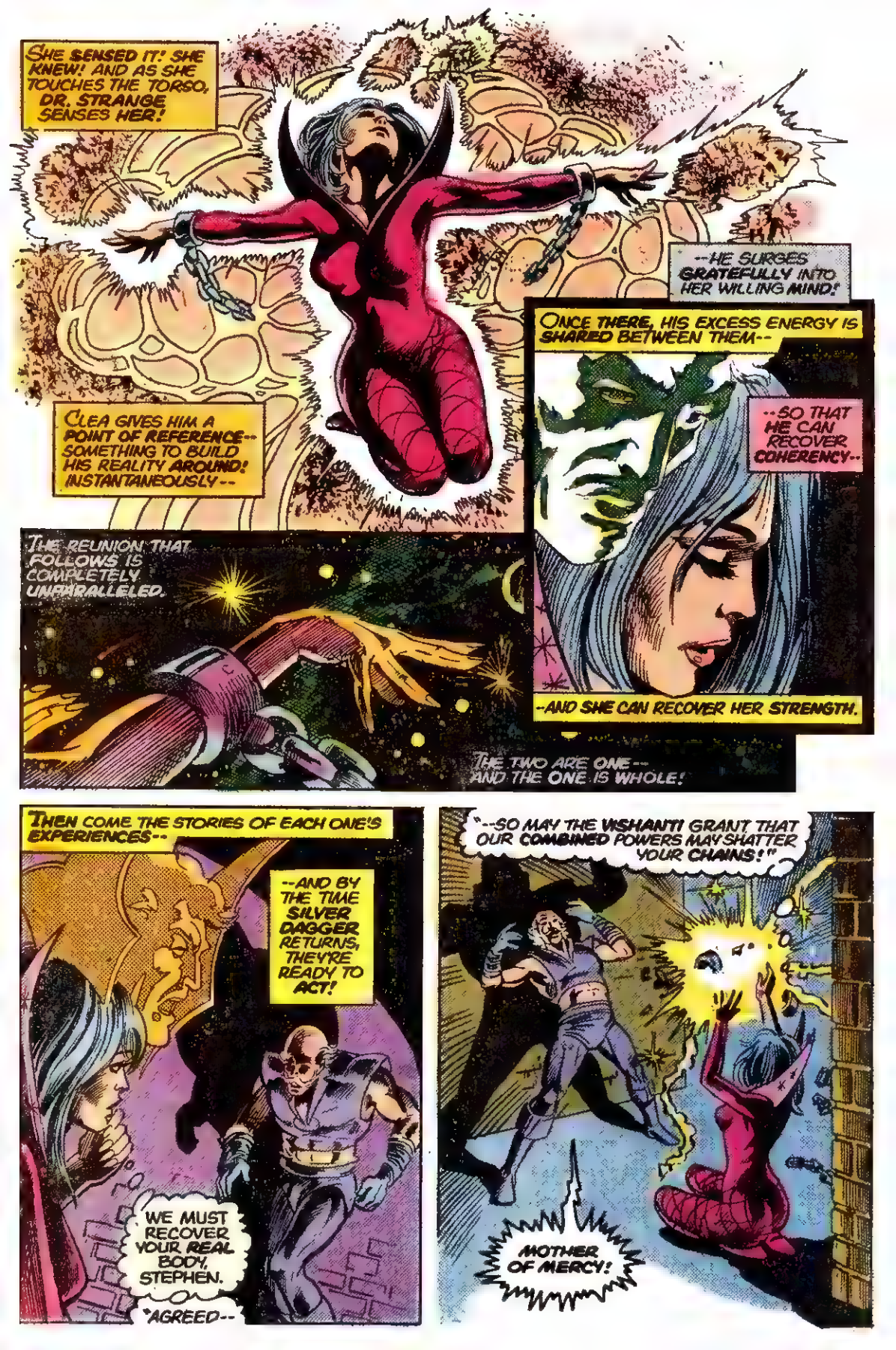
"I COLLAPSED WITHIN MINUTES THERE-AFTER, BUT WHEN I RECOVERED, I QUIT MY CARDINALATE--
"--TO TRAVEL THE WORLD, TO STUDY WITH THE ADEPTS OF ALL THE DARK RELIGIONS. EVERY ONE OF THEM WAS IMPRESSED WITH MY EAGERNESS TO MASTER MY LESSONS--
"--FOR NOT ONE OF THEM WAS TOLD OF MY SPECIAL STATUS!
"THAT WOULD HAVE PUT THEM ON GUARD--
"--AGAINST THE DAY I LEARNED EVERYTHING THEY COULD TEACH--
"--AND RETURNED TO DEMAND THE LORD'S VENGEANCE!
"I WAS BETTER THAN ANY OF THEM! MY WILL FAR OUTSTRIPPED THEIRS!
"FINALLY, I SOUGHT OUT THE ANCIENT ONE--"
--BUT I WAS TOO LATE! THERE WAS A NEW SORCERER SUPREME!
IT WAS DR. STRANGE WHOSE DEATH GOD DECREED!


YOU, AS A NEW DISCIPLE, MIGHT YET BE CAPABLE OF REDEMPTION, SO IT WAS MY DUTY--
Hmmm. UNCONSCIOUS, EH?
THIS WILL PUT A STOP TO THAT! SHE MUSTN'T BE ALLOWED TO REST AT THIS STAGE!
THE SIGHT OF HER LOVER'S CORPSE HIT HER HARD.
SHE'S ABOUT TO BREAK!
WHILE SOFTLY, SOFTLY, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE HOUSE, THE ABANDONED EYE OF AGAMOTTO BEGINS TO GLISTEN WITH A STRANGE WHITE LIGHT--
--WHICH RISES THEN, LIKE A SERPENT, LIKE SMOKE--
--SURGING FORTH FROM WITHIN THE EYE--
--TO FORM THE FIGURE OF--
DR. STRANGE!
DAYS AGONE, HE ENTERED THE ORB OF AGAMOTTO TO WARD OFF IMPENDING DEATH. NOW, HAVING TRIUMPHED OVER THE PERILS HE FOUND THERE, HE HAS BEEN GRANTED RELEASE THROUGH THE EYE!
BUT PRIOR TO THIS, HE BRIEFLY ENCOUNTERED THE ANCIENT ONE-- WHO TOLD HIM HIS RELEASE WOULD BE A REBIRTH!


THIS IS NOTHING OF THE SORT! THIS IS CHAOS! TOPPLING, HE REACHES OUT--
--AND REACHES THROUGH!
IN FACT, AS HE HAD FELT AT THE ANCIENT ONE'S LEVEL! AS HE FLIES FORWARD BLINDLY, IT ALL BECOMES CLEAR! HIS MIND HAS NOT YET REACCUSTOMED ITSELF TO THIS LEVEL'S LIMITATIONS!
FEEL.
HE CANNOT TOUCH THE WALL--BUT HE CAN FEEL! FEEL EVERYTHING WITH A CLARITY AND THRILL AND NOT SINGING SWEETNESS!
FEEL, IN FACT, IN MANY MORE DIMENSIONS THAN JUST LENGTH, WIDTH, HEIGHT, AND TIME.
INVISIBLE, MORE LIKE A GHOST THAN ANYTHING ELSE--
--DR. STRANGE REELS THROUGH A REALITY TOO DEFINITE FOR HIM TO GRASP!
"WHY?" HE TRIES TO ASK. "WHY AM I LIKE THIS? IS IT ANOTHER ONE OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S TRIALS?"
"WHY AM I NOT IN MY BODY? WHERE IS MY BODY?
AT WHICH POINT--
--HE THINKS HE SEES IT!

BUT WHAT THE MIND-EXPANDED MYSTIC HAS ACTUALLY CLASSIFIED FROM THE CACAPHONY OF CONTORTED CONCEPTS CLAMMERING AT HIS BRAIN...
... AND SWIFTLY SUFFUSED WITH HIS SPIRIT...
...IS THE WAX MANNEQUIN SILVER DAGGER "SLEW" ONCE BEFORE.*
*D.S. #2 -- ROY.
TOO LATE, DR. STRANGE UNDERSTANDS HIS ERROR!
HE HAS ANIMATED A HEADLESS THING--
--AND HE'S TOO MUCH AT LOOSE ENDS TO ESCAPE IT NOW!
GROPING, STUMBLING FORWARD--
--WITH NO LONGER EVEN THE LUXURY OF DISTORTED SIGHT AND HEARING--
--AND ONLY HIS YEARS OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTHENING HOLDING HIS THOUGHTS THIS SIDE OF SANITY--
--HE IS A MOST APPALLING APPARITION TO A SURPRISED SILVER DAGGER!
GOOD LORD!...
THE DUMMY IS WALKING!
SOME LAST-DITCH TRICK OF YOURS, LITTLE ONE?

YOU WASTE YOUR TIME IN IDLE PURSUITS, MY DEAR!
WHAT IS A WAX MANNE-QUIN--
--AGAINST AN ENCHANTED BLADE?
A SILVER DAGGER IS THE TRADITIONAL DESTROYER OF DEMONS (SO SAY THE BOOKS I'VE READ) --
--AND THE BOOKS, AS ALWAYS, ARE CORRECT! WHATEVER DEMON DWELT HERE IS AS DEAD AS THE DEMON SORCERER YOU SERVED!
MY KNOWLEDGE MAKES ME EVERY BIT AS POWERFUL AS YOUR DEPARTED MENTOR, WITCH!
DON'T ATTEMPT SUCH THINGS AGAIN!
NOW EXCUSE ME. NATURE CALLS.
STEPHEN--?

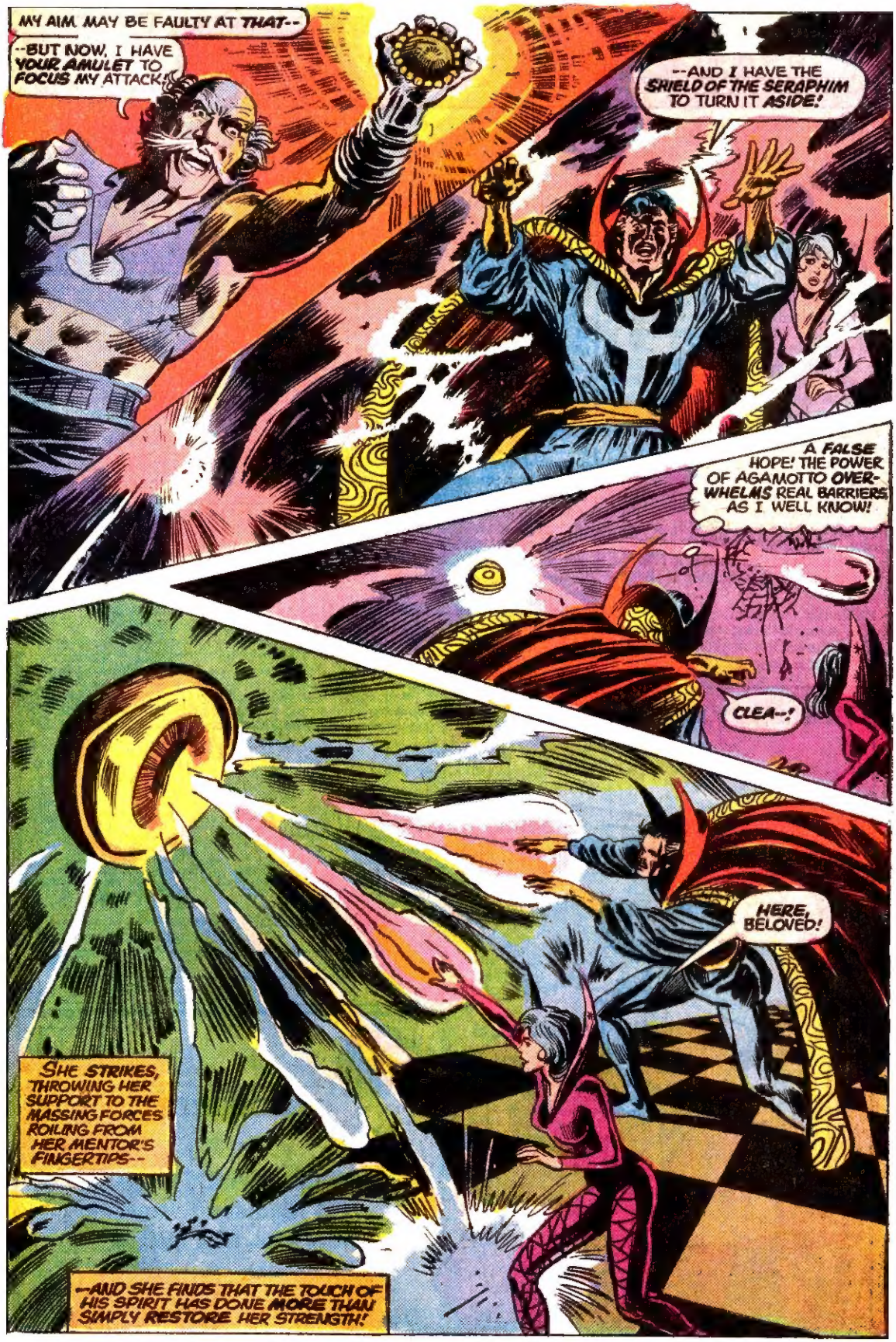

SHE SENSED IT! SHE KNEW! AND AS SHE TOUCHES THE TORSO, DR. STRANGE SENSES HER!
--HE SURGES GRATEFULLY INTO HER WILLING MIND!
ONCE THERE, HIS EXCESS ENERGY IS SHARED BETWEEN THEM--
--SO THAT HE CAN RECOVER COHERENCY--
CLEA GIVES HIM A POINT OF REFERENCE-- SOMETHING TO BUILD HIS REALITY AROUND! INSTANTANEOUSLY--
THE REUNION THAT FOLLOWS IS COMPLETELY UNPARALLELED.
--AND SHE CAN RECOVER HER STRENGTH.
THE TWO ARE ONE-- AND THE ONE IS WHOLE!
THEN COME THE STORIES OF EACH ONE'S EXPERIENCES--
--AND BY THE TIME SILVER DAGGER RETURNS, THEY'RE READY TO ACT!
WE MUST RECOVER YOUR REAL BODY, STEPHEN.
*AGREED--
"--SO MAY THE VISHANTI GRANT THAT OUR COMBINED POWERS MAY SHATTER YOUR CHAINS!"
MOTHER OF MERCY!

THIS IS A MIRAC-- I MEAN--
--SHE WAS NEAR THE BREAKING POINT! SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH--
--LET ALONE THE SKILL-- TO LEVITATE!
NOR TO SWING WIDE THIS OBSTACLE TO MY EXIT, I PRESUME--
--YET IT IS DONE!
19th STREET! THE ABANDONED SUBWAY STATION BELOW SERVED DAGGER WELL--
--BUT NOW ITS LOCATION, ONLY BLOCKS FROM THE SANCTUM, TIPS THE SCALES IN OUR FAVOR!
"RUN, MY LOVE, RUN-- FOR--"
NO MATTER WHAT EVIL FORCES CONVERGE AROUND THAT GIRL --
--NOTHING CAN DEFEAT THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO!
THERE'S LITTLE DOUBT AS TO HER DESTINATION, BUT I'VE ALREADY PLUNDERED STRANGE'S HOUSE OF HER ONLY POSSIBLE DEFENSE!
SHE REFUSED SALVATION! NOW LET THE ALL-SEEING EYE BRING HER RETRIBUTION INSTEAD!

CLEA RUNS LIKE THE WIND, A WILD SONG IN HER SOUL BORN OF FREEDOM AND THE PACE OF THE CHASE! AFTER WHAT SEEMS ONLY SECONDS, SHE IS SPRINTING DOWN THE FINAL STREET!
WE'VE ARRIVED, BELOVED!
"DON'T STOP! USE MY STRENGTH AGAIN!
"BURST THROUGH THE DEFENSES SURROUNDING THE ENTRYWAY--
"--AND THEN HAVE THEM RE-FORM, TO STOP SILVER DAGGER!"
HALT! WHO DARES INTRUDE?
IT'S CLEA, WONG! IS STEPHEN'S BODY YET HERE?
BUT MISS CLEA, YOU--
YES! YES IT IS!
WHILE ONLY TWO BLOCKS BEHIND--
SAY, MAN, THAT WHITE-ON-WHITE CHICK BLEW RIGHT PAST ME--
--BUT YOU LOOK LIKE A CAT WHO'D STOP TO LAY SOME SPARE CHANGE ON ME.
UN-HAND ME!
FIRST, YOU GOT SOME BUSINESS WITH ME, MY MAN!
THEN, WITH A DOCTOR, MAYBE -- OR THE CORONER!
OH, NO, FILTH! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'LL KEEP THAT APPOINTMENT!
I HAVE BUSINESS WITH THAT "CHICK"--
THE SKULKER'S A SKELETON ERE HE TOUCHES THE GROUND!

AND IN THE INTERIM--
"GODS! MY OWN CORPSE!"
WONG, WHY IS IT HERE?
I--I COULD NOT BRING MYSELF TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY TO THE CRYPTS OF KAA-U, MISS.
THE MASTER'S DEATH WAS SO-- ODD... AND THE BODY HAS NOT DETERIORATED...!
"NO, FOR WHILE I WAS IMPRISONED WITHIN THE ORB, I WAS NEITHER ALIVE NOR DEAD!
"YOU HAVE CARRIED ME LONG ENOUGH, CLEA--!
HE'S-- SLIDING FREE OF ME!
"I SEE NOW THAT RATHER THAN RETURING TO REALITY FULLY REBORN, I HAVE BEEN PASSING THROUGH STAGES LEADING TO THAT END!
"FROM ONE WITH ALL--TO A SINGLE SPIRIT, SEARCHING FOR HUMANITY-- TO STABILIZATION WITHIN YOU--"
--TO A LIVING MAN!
STEPHEN!
BUT DOWNSTAIRS--
BEWARE, HERETICS! SILVER DAGGER WILL NOT BE DENIED!

NO NEED FOR RABBITS AND GUILE THIS TIME! THE EYE RENDS STRANGE'S BARRIER LIKE THE RED SEA!
AH, SILVER DAGGER--IF ONLY YOU'D PAUSE TO PONDER A MOMENT--
--TO WONDER AT THAT STAGGERING MANNEQUIN, OR CLEA'S ESCAPE, OR ANY OF A HUNDRED OTHER CLUES TOWARD WHAT AWAITS WITHIN THE SANCTUM.
IF ONLY YOU COULD FEEL THE FORCES AROUND YOU--
--AS YOUR OPPONENT CAN!
HE COMES-- I CAN SENSE IT! AND HE HOLDS THE EYE!
WONG, WITHOUT MAGICAL POWERS, YOU MUST SEEK SHELTER!
CLEA, I WANT YOU TO REMAIN!
AS IF I WOULD LEAVE YOU NOW--!
ALL RIGHT, GIRL: YOUR FLIGHT IS FINISHED!
THIS IS THE END FOR--
YOU, DAGGER!
STRANGE!
BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, HOW DID YOU SURVIVE ME, DEMON?
I SURVIVED BECAUSE I AM NOT A DEMON, MADMAN!
YOUR BLADE'S ENCHANTMENTS WERE AS MISDIRECTED AS THE BLADE ITSELF!


MY AIM MAY BE FAULTY AT THAT--
--BUT NOW, I HAVE YOUR AMULET TO FOCUS MY ATTACK!
--AND I HAVE THE SHIELD OF THE SERAPHIM TO TURN IT ASIDE!
A FALSE HOPE! THE POWER OF AGAMOTTO OVERWHELMS REAL BARRIERS AS I WELL KNOW!
CLEA--!
HERE, BELOVED!
SHE STRIKES, THROWING HER SUPPORT TO THE MASSING FORCES ROILING FROM HER MENTOR'S FINGERTIPS--
--AND SHE FINDS THAT THE TOUCH OF HIS SPIRIT HAS DONE MORE THAN SIMPLY RESTORE HER STRENGTH!

I'M STRONGER! THE POWER IS MORE EASILY MINE!
TOGETHER--WE CAN TURN THE EYE!
NO! NO! IT IS MINE TO COMMAND!
YOU DECEIVE YOURSELF, AS YOU'VE ALWAYS DECEIVED YOURSELF, DAGGER-- AND NOW YOU SHALL KNOW IT!
TURN IT AWAY! STOP IT!
THE EYE IS NOT A GUN, ANSWERABLE ONLY TO HIM WHO HOLDS IT! IT IS A CONDUIT FOR ANY WHO UNDERSTANDS IT--
--AND I AM A SORCERER SUPREME, A MAN OF KNOWLEDGE--
--WHILE YOU ARE ONLY A MAN OF LEARNING!
YOU THINK MAGIC IS NO MORE THAN OBSCURE PHRASES AND ARCANE GESTURES--
--A RECIPE TO BE READ AND APPLIED!
SUCH A BELIEF MAY TAKE YOU FAR, DAGGER--
--BUT NOT AS FAR AS I HAVE GONE!
LET YOUR EYES MEET THE EYE-- AND SEE!!

I SEE--
--ALL THAT YOU SAY IS TRUTH!
AND AS IF HIS WORDS WERE A SIGNAL-- A SURRENDER OF SORTS--
--THE AMULET'S GLOW SEEMS TO SWEEP OUT AROUND HIM, TO DRAW HIM DOWN TOWARD THAT BURNING, BECKONING ABYSS!
HE IS GONE-- INTO THE EYE!
INTO AGAMOTTO'S REALM OF UNREALITY...
... AN END AS FITTING AS ANY.
IN THE LIGHT OF THE AMULET, HE UNDERSTOOD HIS INSANE OBSESSION FOR THE FIRST TIME--
--AND THE UNREALITY OF HIS LIFE ATTRACTED AGAMOTTO JUST AS MY FIRST ATTEMPTS AT SURVIVAL DID.
WILL HE EVER ESCAPE, STEPHEN?
ONLY... IF HIS SKILLS EQUAL MINE...
... AND I'M AFRAID THEY DO NOT.
SO EVEN TODAY-- YEA, AND FOR ALL ETERNITY-- IF YOU WERE TO SEE INSIDE THE REALM OF UNREALITY, YOU WOULD FIND TWO OF THE ODDEST CHARACTERS, ENDLESSLY ENGAGED IN A MOST ENGROSSING DIALOGUE...
...AND THE CATERPILLAR COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.

NEXT: IT'S NOT NICE TO FOOL... MOTHER EARTH!